

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

Vol. 24 No. 4

April 15, 1956

Whole No. 283

## The James Boys in the Saddle Again

by J. Edward Leithead



One of the three Jesse James stories published in American Indian Weekly.



## The James Boys in the Saddle Again

by J. Edward Leithead

(Conclusion)

Second of a series of articles about famous bandits and badmen of the Old West in Dime Novels.

It was the opinion of the late Mr. W. C. Miller that the 35 Jesse James stories I've just listed were rehashed tales from the New York Detective Library, with some of the dialogue and most of the titles changed. I have a very high regard for Mr. Miller's opinion, for he had a great fund of knowledge concerning dime novels which he gladly shared with everyone interested, and he may have been right. But I have compared the style of writing in the Adventure Series with that of John R. Musick (no copy of an F. W. Doughty "James Boys" novel handy to compare) and I can't see that the style is the same. Besides, Carl Greene, the detective, so prominent in New York Detective and James Boys Weekly tales is never mentioned in the Adventure Series outlaw stories that I know of (though his name could have been eliminated), nor does Sheriff Timberlake make frequent appearances.

The style of writing and handling of incidents, to my mind, more resemble the work of St. George Rathborne and T. W. Hanshew, authors of the Log Cabin "James Boys" novels that were reprinted in Jesse

James Stories. The number of original James Boys stories by these two writers, 31, nearly agrees with the number printed in the Adventure Series, 35, they run about the same length, and it's possible that, when Street & Smith stopped publishing James Boys tales, they sold the rights to them to the Westbrook Company, and the latter had "William Ward" (I use quotes, believing the name was a pseudonym) do a complete re-write job.

As a further clue, I offer this: in Adventure Series #34, Jesse James' Blackest Crime, appears a character named Nick Wharton, an old moonshiner. It's a name I've known since boyhood as that of a scout and trapper, with an eccentric horse, Diana, in the Buffalo Bill Stories. Of course, it could be mere coincidence that another oldster named Nick Wharton turns up in a Westbrook novel; or it could indicate that Jesse James' Blackest Crime, under another title, was a tale originally written by St. George Rathborne for Street & Smith. Rathborne wrote quite a few early Buffalo Bill Stories, may have invented the characters (one of them

## DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

Vol. 24 No. 4

April 15, 1956

Whole No. 233

Published Monthly at

821 Vermont Street, Lawrence, Kansas

Edited by

Edward T. LeBlanc, 36 Taylor St., Fall River, Mass.

Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Lawrence, Kansas

Price \$2.00 per year

Assistant Editor

Ralph F. Cummings, Fisherville, Mass.

Asst. Ed. Photography—Charles Duprez, 228 Larch Lane, Smithtown, L.I., N.Y.

Ad Rates — 6c per word. \$1.00 per inch, quarter page \$2.25, half page \$3.00 and Full Page \$5.00. — 4 times for the price of three.

Ads should be submitted by the 15th of the month in order to assure publication in the following month's issue.



equine, but a character just the same) of Nick Wharton and his Diana.

It's entirely possible, too, that he first used the name in a James Boys story, making Wharton a moonshiner instead of a frontiersman. I got my first inkling that Rathborne was author of the early stories in *Rough Rider Weekly* from the fact that he named a ranch "Sunset Ranch" by Earl Rossiter, a rival of Ted Strong's, and either before or after, in penning the *Ranch and Range Series*, which was issued in paper-covered and cloth-bound editions under his own name, he gave to the first volume the title, *Sunset Ranch*. This series of three had nothing to do with Ted Strong's *Rough Riders*, though the third volume was *The Young Range Riders* and the *Black Mountain Ranch* bunch in early *Rough Rider Weekly* tales were often referred to as "the young range riders."

Here's an excerpt from Jesse James' *Blackest Crime* (*Adventure Series #34*)—Jesse has found out that old Nick Wharton double-crossed him, and with the help of a dwarf companion, Dick the Rat, winds up the moonshiner's ball of yarn:

"Jesse drew a flask from his pocket and forced a copious draught of brandy down the throat of the unconscious man. After a few moments their prisoner stirred and Jesse directed Dick to strip him of his weapons and bind his feet and hands. This the boy skillfully did.

"Jesse sat down and patiently waited until the old moonshiner should have come to his senses again. This he did after a few moments, and his eyes slowly opening, fixed themselves almost in terror on the face of the notorious outlaw. Jesse merely gazed at him with a sardonic grin on his face.

"'You!' breathed the mountaineer. 'Good God!'

"'I thought it would surprise you,' replied the outlaw with a cruel smile. 'Didn't expect me, did you, old muffin-face?'

"As the moonshiner gazed, the terror in his eyes increased.

"Don't you think you are a nice

specimen of a man to go back on a fellow who gave you help when the revenuers were after you? And even Dick the Rat here helped you out, and when I told you I was a friend of his you jeered at me. And that was not all, you had me tied up like a common thief and dragged clear across the mountain where you were on your way now to torture me. Nick Wharton, you are a measly skunk. But you have got to the end of your rope."

Jesse is sure Wharton is lying in answer to questions put to him. The desperado loses patience.

"Well, we won't argue the question. It don't matter whether you are telling the truth or not. I'll find out for myself. You can't fool Jesse James for long. Dick, gag him."

"Breaking a twig from a tree the dwarf skillfully inserted it in the mouth of the helpless man and secured it with a thong of leather which he drew from his pocket. Jesse watched the operation with an amused smile.

"You work as if you had had considerable practice, Dick. Now see if the old man has got any rope with him. He probably has some about him that he hoped to use on me," grinned Jesse.

"De bloke's got a lariat," informed Dick.

"That will do. Now take off his boots and tie it to his feet."

"Doing as he had been directed, the dwarf paused, awaiting further directions. Jesse motioned to throw the leather's end over a limb above them, then taking a firm hold of the leather the two men hauled the old moonshiner clear of the ground and made secure the free end of the lariat around a sapling nearby.

"Nick Wharton," announced the great desperado impressively, 'I am not going to kill you all at once. I want you to die by inches, and while you are dying remember that you sought to cut off the hand that saved you. I am not even going to shoot you up, for that would call some of your cursed band here and they might want to cut you down. When they find you you will be dead. Give him



a push, Dick. He may enjoy the sensation.'

"Dick obeyed the command with a will and the body of the tortured man swung back and forth, while his torturer sat chuckling and rocking in his awful glee.

"Thus Jesse James avenges himself," announced the great desperado, turning away and leaving his victim swinging from the limb of the tree by his heels, to die a slow and terrible death.

"Where to?" asked Dick.

"To get some horses, then for the overland stage," answered Jesse sternly."

Another clue of a similar kind from Westbrook's American Indian Weekly #28, The Doom of the Bandit Brothers, or, The Demon Renegades; the author given, "Colonel Spencer Dair", is a stock name on about half the stories in this weekly. It's a tale of the James Boys and Cole Younger at odds with the Fifth Cavalry, and one of the characters is "Roaring Bill" Bradley, who runs a dancehall at Nayo, Missouri, and does too much talking about the James Boys. St. George Rathborne introduced a crooked sheriff named "Roaring Bill" Reynolds in early issues of Rough Rider Weekly. Again it could be a coincidence that some other writer than Rathborne picked a name like Roaring Bill; but, on the other hand, I know that writers, especially those who do a great deal of writing, sometimes unconsciously use names similar to those they've used before. Or they may particularly like the name of a character or a place and use it again, with variations. From this and the style of writing, I conclude the story was by St. George Rathborne, one of his Log Cabin "James Boys" novels re-titled.

I quote from The Doom of the Bandit Brothers, a scene in Roaring Bill's dancehall, with Jesse James baiting the man who talked too much:

"Jesse laughed in a strange manner. He walked over to the bar, still keeping his revolver trained upon Roaring Bill's head, and he poured out a glassful of whiskey.

"Now you come over here, Bill, and take a drink with me," continued Jesse. 'No, don't put your hands down. Get down and lap up that booze.

"In spite of his protestations, Roaring Bill was forced to hold his hands up in the air, lean over, grasp the whiskey glass between his teeth, and drink as much of it as he could, under the embarrassing circumstances. The fiery stuff caused the dance-hall proprietor to choke and swear, but nevertheless, he managed to get a good portion of the whiskey down his throat.

"That's the way dogs drink," hissed Jesse. 'You're nothing but a common, everyday dog, so I made you drink the way you should. You run a dance-hall, Roaring Bill, and I'm going to see how you can dance.'

"Roaring Bill weighed two hundred and fifty pounds, and was built according to his weight.

"Why, Jesse, I can't dance!" he whined.

"Bang! The shot from the revolver in Jesse's right hand neatly clipped the straps on the right boot of the dance-hall proprietor.

"Dance!" howled the outlaw.

"Swearing like a certain army in Flanders, Roaring Bill awkwardly began to shuffle about on his feet. Jesse James enjoyed the spectacle hugely.

"You dance like a bear!" bawled Jesse. 'Hey, Bill! Hit it up!'

"Roaring Bill tried to dance a little faster. Bang! went Jesse's revolver. The shot neatly cut the straps on Bill's left boot, and he began to dance with more abandon.

"Whirl around, Bill," cried Jesse. 'Give us some fancy steps.'

"Roaring Bill knew that Jesse was in a humor where he might do anything, so he did 'hit it up' and with elephantine grace gamboled around the room.

"Get up on the bar, Bill," commanded Jesse. 'Dance up and down the bar, and if you fall off, I'll kill you!'

"Roaring Bill made heavy weather in getting up on top of the bar, but he did so finally, and capered about, doing his best to satisfy the outlaw,



and for half an hour the unfortunate dance-hall keeper shuffled about while cut-glass flew in every direction and the bar looked as if a cyclone had struck it."

Jesse empties his gun at the bar, draws another gun—but Roaring Bill snatches out a weapon of his own, throws a shot and drops behind the bar. The bullet is deflected by Jesse's belt buckle, though the impact staggers him. Sounds of aroused citizenry outside warn him he'd best be getting out of there. But, wanting to down Roaring Bill first, he "overturned two or three chairs, making an impromptu bulwark before him." Jesse and the man behind the bar bang away at each other, the outlaw getting a bullet through the crown of his hat.

"Jesse James immediately pulled the hat backward and shuffled with his feet and groaned as if in his death agony.

"Roaring Bill felt sure that he had killed the notorious outlaw and with a wild shout of triumph rushed from his place of refuge . . . Jesse fired from behind his shelter, between the rounds of one of the chairs, and the outlaw's bullet struck the dance-hall keeper directly in the center of his broad chest.

"With a scream that echoed through the room, Roaring Bill collapsed and fell to the floor dying. His revenge having been satiated, Jesse James ran out of the place and vaulted upon his horse."

Note the phrase above, "the notorious outlaw"—the same phrase is in the excerpt from Jesse James' Black-et Crime, suggesting both were written by the same man.

Besides #28, there were other James Boys tales in American Indian Weekly, no doubt the work of the same writer—I wish to acknowledge here the kindness of Ralph Cummings in supplying me with novels from his collection which I needed to write this article. #25 is Red Hand of the North-west, or, The Pirates of Hornaday River—Jesse James is in this one. He's working with pirates and Indians, of whom Red Hand is the leader. Northwest Mounted Police are

in this number, too, and I think it must be a re-write of an original Street & Smith "James Boys" tale. #26 is The Hermit Bandit's Revenge, or, The League of the Fur-Stealers. In this story a bandit named Maxwell Hyde, near the end, turns out to be Jesse James himself. Another re-write, probably. #27, The Curse of Coronation Gulf, or, The Outlaws of Blue Waters, has Maxwell Hyde in it, with little said about Jesse. #29, The Witch of Devil Whirlpool, or, The Gun-Men of Split Lake—again Maxwell Hyde, who is Jesse—both Jesse and Frank James in this one. Strangely, though, Hyde seems to be in the detective profession. A re-write, no doubt.

Well, there they are. I don't say that my findings are proof that the James Boys stories in Adventure Series and American Indian Weekly are reprints from Log Cabin Library—and re-written, some or all of them, for the Westbrook publications—but to me it seems to point that way.

Very early historians of the James-Younger band, like J. W. Buel, Jay Donald and a writer named Dacus (I do not recall his first name), related the adventures of Jesse and Frank in Texas and Mexico, which were the source of many dime novels about the James Boys. These adventures were passed over by later biographers until, recently, was published "The Complete and Authentic Life of Jesse James", by Carl W. Brehman (Friederick Fell, Inc., Publishers, New York). This excellent biography, with a whole section devoted to illustrations, gives a good account of the Texas and Mexico angle of the James Boys' lives after the Northfield bank raid broke up the original gang. And still more recently, a novel based on Jesse's life, "Death of a Legend", by Will Henry, has been published by Random House, New York. You'll never read a better book about the James-Younger gang than this one.

There was a paper-backed series of books called The Bandit Series, published by I. & M. Ottenheimer, Baltimore, Md. At least eight of them were issued, about the James Boys. I



have before me #5, Jesse James' Thrilling Raid, or, The Daylight Robbery of the Harkness Bank. Similar in appearance to Westbrook's Adventure Series, but not as attractive as to cover. The author is given as "Captain Kennedy", and titles listed on title page are Jesse James' Wild Leap, Jesse James' Mysterious Warning and Jesse James' Daring Trick. At the end of the story, it says, "Be sure to read the next story, Jesse James' Wild Leap, or, The Holdup of the Through Express. It is No. 6 in the Bandit Series." Here again, on page 20, occurs the phrase, "the notorious outlaw". There are no such titles as the foregoing in James Boys tales in Adventure Series, but titles are easily changed. On the title page of #5 appears the imprint of I. & M. Ottenheimer, Publishers, with their address, and above it, "Copyrighted 1915 Royal Pub. Co." I think these are reprints from the Adventure Series, and in speaking of them, Mr. W. C. Miller once said they were reprinted Jesse James Stories, meaning the Street & Smith colored cover weekly, and since many of the Jesse James Stories were reprinted from Log Cabin Library, that takes us right back to what I believe is the original source of all these paper-backed book series.

Other titles published by Ottenheimer are: The James Boys' Deeds of Daring, The James Boys—Missouri Bandits, Frank James and His Brother Jesse. And the Regan Publishing Corporation issued the following by Clarence E. Ray: The James Boys and Bob Ford, The Younger Brothers, Bob and Cole Younger With Quantrell, the Outlaw. They also published The James Boys—Notorious Bank and Train Robbers and probably others about the Jameses of which I lack information.

The son of Jesse James died March 27th, 1951, at Los Angeles, California. He was 75 and a much respected lawyer of Kansas City. Jesse James, Jr. revealed great strength of character it surely must have been a tough, uphill climb, aided in his ambition to become a member of the bar by the son

of Thomas T. Crittenden, Governor of Missouri at the time Bob Ford shot Jesse and Frank turned in his guns. Besides his son, Jesse, Jr., the elder Jesse had a daughter, Mary, and Frank had a son, Robert. All turned out well. Jesse James, Jr. authored a paper-covered biography, Jesse James, My Father, published by the Westbrook Co.

The End

## DARLING OF THE MOB

By Fred T. Singleton

Shortly before midnight, November 16, 1724, after many hours dodging rioting sympathizers fighting to keep his body from the surgeons, friendly hands finally threw the last shovelful of dirt on the grave of Jack Sheppard, twenty-two years and eight months old, a commonplace young thief, but ever since celebrated as the Prince of Prison Breakers. He had swung at Tyburn's cruel Triple-Tree that morning, dying with great difficulty much pitied by the people.

More than two hundred years later, in 1933, Jack Sheppard turns up in the Notable British Trials Series, after the stories of fifty-eight other worse criminals had been told. As the Sheppard saga runs like a bloodied hempen thread through the thrilling and romantic fiction of the Victorian era, and as book jackets are more perishable than the books themselves, the excellent advertisement-summary thereon of what the book is all about is here preserved:

"Jack Sheppard is the most famous criminal in the records of English crime; not by reason of his actual offenses, which were merely petty thefts, but because he accomplished three very remarkable escapes from the prisons of Clerkenwell and Newgate. In the most celebrated of these escapes he effected his release unaided and alone, in darkness, and with merely a nail and an iron bar (wrenched from a chimney) for tools. His pluck, gaiety, strength, and endurance, and the bravery with which he met his cruel gallows death at the age of twenty-two, have tinted his otherwise sordid story with piti-



ful romance. Through the course of two centuries his brief career has formed the subject of numerous romances, dramas in the theater, and literary allusions by famous folk.

"This volume provides a full account of Jack Sheppard's life and achievements, and of his trial in 1724; an Epilogue relating his posthumous fame in Literature and Drama; an extensive Bibliography; three contemporary accounts of his career—two of them attributed to the pen of Defoe; a note on Jonathan Wild, and a rare contemporary memoir of that arch criminal, who was the associate of Jack Sheppard and the main factor in the early termination of his life."

Horace Bleackley and S. M. Ellis edited this noteworthy Trials Series volume. It might prove to be the last word on the great prison breaker. Both Bleackley and Ellis were experienced in working both sides the spectered streets off the bright literary freeways, Bleackley having run up a list of twenty books including *Some Distinguished Victims of the Scaffold* (1905), *A Gentleman of the Road* (1911), *Hangmen of England* (1929), and Ellis getting credit for an excellent full length biography of William Harrison Ainsworth (1910), and shorter most interesting ones of Wilkie Collins, R. D. Blackmore, J. Sheridan Le Fanu, Mrs. J. H. Riddell, and other Victorian writers of expensive novels read in Mudie's select libraries during the sixties and seventies (Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu, and Others, 1931).

In his Sheppard Bibliography Ellis lists and describes ninety-nine items, working out a most astonishing document. Never before could any criminal have received so much publicity in pamphlets and news sheets. Printer-publishers had thrived and multiplied since ears could no longer be cut off star-chamber style. Ellis lists ten different newspapers giving space

to the Sheppard escapes and the trial and execution, including the *Original Weekly Journal* and the *Daily Journal*, both printed and sold by John Applebee. Daniel Defoe was a contributor to the first named paper, and the most notable contemporary pamphlet on Jack's career, *A Narrative of All the Robberies, Escapes, etc., of John Sheppard*, is attributed to him. This was no little chapbook but a sixpenny document of some fifty pages, with an exciting account of Jack's great escape from Newgate. A total of eight editions of this work were published, two before the trial and execution. At least nine other similar pamphlets were published during the last three months of 1724, some of them illustrated and priced at a shilling. Printshops gathered some of the Sheppard-fan coin with engravings, and many flash songs and telltale sheets "to raise my name above all rogues in story" were cried all over London for many a day.

---

Will pay \$1.50 for Liberty Boys of 76  
No. 79 without cover or

Cover only of Liberty Boys No. 11

Will pay \$2.50 for Liberty Boys  
Nos. 82, 109, 117

For Sale: Liberty Boys Nos. 207, 240,  
312 (Whole but condition only Fair,  
\$1.00 each)

Don. S. Learnard

154 Belmont St., Weymouth 88, Mass.

---

### WANTED

Sherlock Holmes items

Please quote condition and price to

Mrs. E. A. Cameron

404 Laurel Hill Road

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

---

### TIP TOPS FOR SALE

No junk. All clean sound items with good covers. Not brittle, stamped or taped. Money back if not satisfied.

Nos. 130 to 182 \$1.25 each

Nos. 183 to 300 \$1.00 each

Nos. 301 to 450 \$.75 each

Many earlier and later numbers.

Guinon, Box 214, Little Rock, Ark.

---

### MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

199 H. J. Kreling, 196 Urdano Drive, San Francisco, Calif. (New)

91 Roy E. Swanstrom, 617½ East Maryland Ave., St. Paul, Minn. (New add.)

68 Capt. Frank C. Acker, USS Monrovia, FPO New York, N. Y. (New add.)



## NED BUNTLINE

Ned Buntline was a dime novel author. He lived the life he wrote about, and his own adventures were more thrilling than his novels. He roamed the plains with Texas Jack, Wild Bill and Buffalo Bill. He wrote the first dime novel about Buffalo Bill ever written. He put Buffalo Bill on the stage in a play he wrote overnight. He published a newspaper. He was always in trouble with the law. His biography, by Jay Monaghan, is a handsome illustrated clothbound book. It was published at \$4.50 per copy. I have brand new copies now available at \$3.50, while they last.

Ned Buntline dime novels at \$2.00 each, and up.

Ned Buntline's famous newspaper—Ned Buntline's Own—at \$2.00 per copy (3 different for \$5.00)

---

Fiction Factory—the life story of Street & Smith, their writers, artists, editors—and their big line of dime novels, magazines and books. Profusely illustrated. Novel and magazine covers in full colors. Handsomely bound, with leather backstrip, brand new. \$5.00.

The House of Beadle. In 2 large volumes. All about Beadle's dime novels, handbooks, story papers. Nearly 1000 double-column pages. Profusely illustrated. Published at \$20.00. Get your set now for \$12.50.

Boys Will Be Boys. Clothbound, illustrated book on English bloods. You should have it. \$3.00.

Frank Leslie's Boys and Girls Weekly. Hundreds of copies on hand. A real rare story paper. A few of the runs available at \$10.00 each—#27 to 52. 105 to 130. 261 to 286. 469 to 494. Complete set also available. Sample order, 5 different, \$2.00.

Happy Days and Golden Hours. Lists ready.

Old Story papers—Chimney Corner, Saturday Night, Fireside Companion, New York Weekly, New York Ledger, Family Story Paper—all kinds. What's wanted? Send \$1.00 for five different, assorted.

A No. 1, the famous tramp. Books of hobo adventures by this famous man. \$1.00 each.

Diamond Dick. Thick books. \$1.00 each.

Outlaw novels, thick books, \$1.00 each.

Work and Win. Lots of early numbers on hand.

Postpaid. Subject to prior sale.

**Ralph P. Smith**

Box 985

Lawrence, Mass.